

## Corporate Social Responsibility in a Multinational Enterprise: A New DNA for Business

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### Abstract

This aim of this study is to investigate the corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of a multinational enterprise (MNE) in Malaysia that received an award from the Government, the "Prime Minister's CSR Award" (a well-recognised CSR award in Malaysia), due to its outstanding CSR practice. We chose this company because of prior literature finding that MNEs in developing countries were more involved in philanthropic acts. In our case, we found that the CSR initiatives are embedded in the company's business daily activities. As explained by its CEO: *"To us, corporate responsibility is part of [a] company's DNA; it's a very driven notion. We strongly adhere to the business philosophy of "doing great while doing good", that is, keeping the principles of responsibility on our radar screen as we strive for excellence in our business"*.

**Key Words:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Multinational Enterprise, Corporate Sustainability, Developing Countries, Malaysia

### 1. Introduction

*"It's clear that we need to move CSR up the business agenda and embed it into the DNA of every company"* (Dato Seri Najib Tun Razak, Malaysia Prime Minister, Opening Speech, 2010 CSR Prime Minister's Award). The Prime Minister's statement shows the importance of connecting CSR initiatives with business objectives and incorporating them in daily practices. Moreover, the practices help businesses to achieve their economic, environmental, and social activities, while at the same time, satisfying stakeholders' demands and expectations [1]. CSR has many virtual synonyms, which sometimes overlap with each other for the same purpose, i.e. to differentiate the meanings of *business responsibility and ethical business*. Those synonyms include corporate responsibility (CR), social responsiveness, corporate citizenship, corporate social performance and corporate sustainability (CS).

There is limited academic work that tracks the development of CSR initiatives in developing countries, particularly in Malaysia. For the companies in those countries, CSR is considered to be a new business approach, although the concept is well-established in many developed and western countries [2-5]. Factors such as state economic development, differences in political systems, cultures, and pressure from international institutions such as the United Nations, MNEs, international NGOs, ethical fund managers, foreign customers, etc., are among the factors that have influenced CSR development and practices in developing countries [3, 4, 6, 7].